

September 21, 2011

Chairman Pavlov and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak regarding the future of school choice in Michigan. My name is Dave Angerer. Since July of 2000, I have been directly involved with Michigan's public education system. From 2000-2008, I served as the Head of School of Black River Public School, a K-12 public charter school in Holland, MI. Since 2008, I have served as the Executive Principal for PrepNet LLC, an educational service provider operating three Michigan charter high schools. These schools are:

Grand River Preparatory High School in Kentwood;

Wellspring Preparatory High School in Grand Rapids; and

Arbor Preparatory High School in Ypsilanti Township.

I'd like to share with you some information about PrepNet, as well as my perspective on the current debate regarding school reform.

At PrepNet, we serve a diverse student population. Our schools' demographics include a 55% minority population. Approximately 40% of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch, and 10% receive special education services. Though students may come to us from all walks of life, they come with a common goal—preparation for success in college.

Though we are a young organization, we are already helping students realize this goal. Our first PrepNet school, Grand River Prep, is in its 4th year of operation. This fall we welcomed 480 students, and this year we will graduate our first class. Our seniors have already turned in impressive academic results by averaging a 22.2 ACT composite score and achieving Michigan Merit Exam proficiency scores that rank them among the top high schools in Michigan. All of us involved in Grand River Prep—our teachers, our school leader, and our board members—are proud of their accomplishments, and look forward to building upon these results with each successive graduating class.

2011 Michigan Merit Exam Results for Grand River Preparatory High School.

Subject area score reflect the percentage of proficient students.

Average ACT	22.2
Math	87%
Science	87%
Social Studies	100%
Reading	84%
Writing	66%

More information available at:

<http://www.freep.com/article/20110628/NEWS06/110627059/Database-Michigan-high-school-ACT-MME-scores>

We are growing to meet Michigan families' needs. This fall, we welcomed 460 new families of 9th grade students into our 3 high schools, including Arbor Prep, which first opened this fall. . I wish you could hear, first hand, what I hear from these parents: the overwhelming gratitude they share with me for the opportunity to attend a safe, small, academically-focused high school that delivers on its mission of preparing students for college success.

While I am very proud of these schools and their accomplishments to date, I am also here to offer my observations to you regarding the change I have seen over time once one of our schools becomes established in a community:

I have seen the best of the traditional public schools and private schools refocus their efforts to develop higher quality programs and better serve the needs of students and parents they are trying to attract to their school. That is, students win, and not just those who attend our schools.

Similar to other sectors, healthy competition does, in fact, raise quality and reduce costs for our customers: public school parents and their children. It spurs innovation and encourages us all to deliver the quality public education that parents demand, at a value that taxpayers deserve.

Though we are proud of the value that we provide for taxpayers, I would like to point out that our schools receive 20% less funding than the traditional public schools in communities we serve.

Charter schools also receive zero assistance with facilities funding. I am not advocating for special funding for charters. However, as you consider your reform agenda, please consider leveling the playing field for all public school funding.

Lastly, as this committee is reviewing a number of school reform proposals, I encourage you to remain focused on the core principle of empowering parents. In the end, I believe that empowering parents with quality choices will help parents and students, like the students that have traveled here with me today, select a school that will help them fulfill their dreams.

Though you will have the opportunity to hear from these students today, I would like to invite you all to see firsthand how PrepNet is offering a quality choice for families and preparing students for college. We would be honored for you to visit Grand River Prep, Wellspring Prep, or Arbor Prep to see firsthand our program and meet dedicated teachers, leaders, and board members.

On behalf of Michigan's parents, thank you for offering these choices. I would be pleased to answer any questions you have.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Angerer

Executive Principal

PrepNet, LLC